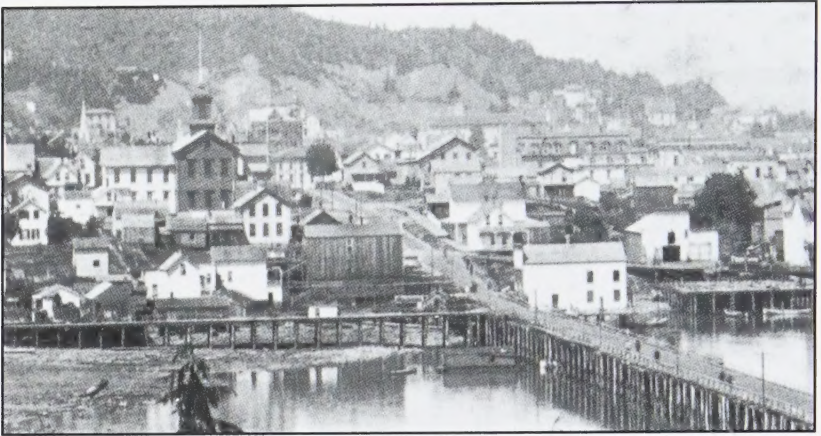


CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

CUMTUX



VOL. 44, No. 2—SPRING 2024



EXTENSIVE EXCAVATION AND SCARRING OF THE HILLSIDE IS VISIBLE IN THIS VIEW LOOKING WEST FROM SCOW BAY. THE EXCHANGE STREET BRIDGE AT LOWER RIGHT; SHIVELY SCHOOL IS THE DARK BUILDING IN THE CENTER WITH THE BELL TOWER LOCATED AT 16TH AND EXCHANGE STREETS; CAPTAIN GEORGE FLAVEL'S HOUSE, IN THE DISTANCE AT CENTER IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. CA. 1885.

In This Issue ...

The first story in this issue was originally chosen to show how easy it is to do historical research in Oregon by using the free website "Historic Oregon Newspapers" and other means. "Landslides" was chosen as a topic. It wasn't long before it became evident that this was a topic of immense importance. A slide here and there can easily be forgotten, but over the years, the number of them is shocking. At present, the Historic Oregon Newspapers website covers Clatsop County mainstream newspapers from 1873 to 1909, then jumps to 2015. The landslide articles in this issue are from the early period alone.

Emelia Smed Bohm's childhood experiences led her to become an agent for change. In this issue, she describes the difficult life she had as a result and the satisfaction she had to see many changes she had worked for.

Ruth Gregg, a reporter for the Astorian Budget describes what it was like to take flying lessons in 1931 at the Clatsop County airport on a wet, windy day.

Road Taxes is a letter by J. P. or J. T. Andersen requesting credit for his work on the road. Can you read it without looking at the transcription? Who is he? He doesn't show up on the city directories or census. He was probably Swedish or Norwegian.

Another Reunion photo, this time for the 45th Reunion of the AHS Class of 1979. Reunion Story by Laura Torres.

—The Editor

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Heritage Museum

16th and Exchange St., Astoria

Flavel House Museum

8th and Duane St., Astoria

Oregon Film Museum

7th and Duane St., Astoria

Uppertown Firefighters Museum

30th and Marine Drive, Astoria

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by Laura Penner

FRONT COVER:

RUTH GREGG IN HER AVIATOR OUTFIT, *see story
on page 22.*

CUMTUX: Chinook jargon:

"To know...to inform"

ASTORIA'S NEWSPAPERS AND CARD (APL) INDEX

NEWSPAPER INDEXES

The best source of information about the history of a community is usually the newspaper. The Astoria Public Library has a large collection of newspapers donated by Steve Forrester of the Daily Astorian years ago. Without an index to the newspaper, it is difficult to find information needed on any one topic. Bruce Berney, the Astoria Public Library director, suggested to library volunteer Jean Anderson that she begin indexing newspapers which she did for one year. In 1978, he then successfully applied for the first of several grants to continue the work she started. Indexing continued until the 1990s resulting in thousands of index cards at the library. (The index includes many but not every name in the newspaper.) A recent advance was the scanning of the newspaper index cards, just completed by CCHS Digital Archivist Julie Burpee and two CCHS volunteers Gabe Battis and Adam De Prez. The index is free, on the Internet Archive website, <https://archive.org/details/clatsopcountyhistoricalsociety>. The newspaper index is identified by the image of cards with letters of the alphabet. Each stack of cards may number in the hundreds.

Find the card with the right range of letters you want. Keep clicking until you find the word you want. There may be several cards for one person. The card will give the date and name of the newspaper.

MICROFILMS

The University of Oregon Library microfilmed the state's newspapers years ago. Microfilms of many of the county's newspapers were placed in the Astoria Public Library for researchers to use. Microfilming ended with the change to scanning.) This is the most complete source for local newspapers. The microfilms are in the CCHS Archives Room, along with the printer. The oldest Astoria newspaper, the Astoria Marine Gazette, (1864–1866) is on microfilm only and at CCHS. The films range from 1864 to 2006.

SCANNED NEWSPAPERS

A big change occurred when the University of Oregon scanned some of the microfilms, making them available on their website: the Historic Oregon Newspapers (uoregon.edu) This website is available free to anyone with a computer and the Internet. All you have to do is put a name or subject in the search line. The search engine will pull out

all the papers that have that word and you can quickly look at each newspaper. One advantage is that they pick up almost every occurrence of a name (and a few wrong ones.) The most useful papers are the following:

Tri-Weekly Astorian July 1, 1873 to Jan 31, 1874—None from Feb 1, 1874–Apr 30, 1876 (15 months)

The Daily Astorian May 1, 1876 to Nov 9, 1883

The Morning Astorian Nov 10, 1883 to Sept 1, 1899

The morning Astorian Sep 2, 1899 to May 19, 1909—None–May 20, 1909 to Dec 31, 2014 (105 years)

The daily Astorian Jan 1, 2015 to Sept 8, 2022.

The newspaper names are confusing. To help, the U. of O. used upper case and lower case to separate out the issues.

Among other local newspapers scanned and on this site, the *Toveri* and the *Toveritar* are in Finnish as was the *Columbia Press* at times. The *Western American* is a KKK publication. The *Budget* was an important

newspaper and is missing but is on the microfilms.

This is the easiest and quickest collection to use but it has serious gaps in the local coverage. Missing are dates from Feb. 1, 1874 to Apr. 30, 1876 (15 months) and May 20, 1909 to Dec 31, 2014 (105 years). For the missing years, the microfilm rolls at CCHS may help. Another warning: Some months and days were not filmed though the range above doesn't show that. Note that it may be helpful to search throughout the state and not just the local area for a person or subject. Newspapers in other areas may cover dates and subjects that can help. (The U. of O. Library reports that they will accept donations to scan more newspapers. See their website.)

Astoria Public Library members can view the microfilms in the CCHS Archives Room with no charge by showing their library membership cards. Those who are not members of the library are charged \$5. ➡

LANDSLIDES

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| -mammoth slide west of city (WA) | 4-4-1879:3 |
| -slide near road to uppertown (DA) | 3-1-1882:3 |
| -Street Supt. Chadwick notifies owners of property to clear landslides off sidewalks and streets adjoining property (ADB) | 8-5-1893:4 |
| -large landslide above Scow Bay endangers two houses; Bart Wells and Henry Lockhain houses (ADB) | 1-20-1894:1 |

SAMPLE FROM ASTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWSPAPER INDEX CARD CATALOG ON CCHS'S INTERNET ARCHIVE SITE.

HTTPS://ARCHIVE.ORG/DETAILS/
ASTORIAPUBLICLIBRARYNEWSPAPERINDEX

LANDSLIDES

by Liisa Penner

THE FIRST OCCUPATION of the land in this westernmost part of the continent was by the Native American populations whose home this was for many generations. In 1811, New Yorker John Jacob Astor sent a party of people out west to trade with the Indians for furs to ship back east. British fur traders then took over, remaining in power until the British gave up ownership to this area. A few early visitors from the Eastern and Mid-western states began arriving, among them John Shively, John McClure, Samuel Cole Smith, George Washington Cook and John Adair. When the U. S. donation law was passed in 1850 as a means of encouraging "Americans" to take up land claims, these men were among the early claimants for property at Astoria. After surveying the land, they sold parcels of it to newcomers, who were arriving in steadily increasing numbers from across the Plains, and by ships.

In the earliest years of settlement, families were responsible for their own welfare. Each household had a garden and animals for eggs, milk and meat. They collected their own drinking water, saving rain water in barrels or scooped up from nearby streamlets. They disposed of waste

by dropping it into the river or in a hole or a trench on the property. Fire was used for heat and cooking. There were no roads, no railroad, no electricity, no telegraph. Occasionally ships brought supplies and enterprising residents set up stores to purchase quantities of items which they sold to other residents.

Wood was readily available in the forests nearby for building houses. The first ones were built on low land close to the river. A disadvantage was the high tides in winter that could wash away the improvements on their properties. As more settlers arrived, houses were built on the lower slopes of the hill and gradually the higher ones.

In time, the town residents organized a council that worked on projects for the betterment of the community: roads, fire control, a jail, etc. They also expected residents to pay taxes for these services or labor in lieu of paying taxes. (see J. P. Andersen letter page 21.)

The climate in Astoria was generally comfortable with no highs or lows unlike inland areas. But large amounts of precipitation came in the winter months. Much of this was stored in the forested hillside and flowing downhill to the river. Streamlets were once considered an

asset as fresh rainwater was a necessity for the household. One example is that of the developer of William-sport (on the south side of Astoria) who advertised lots for sale in a Dec 26, 1879 newspaper "William-sport has three living streams of water upon it affording an abundant supply of water for 150,000 inhabitants. The flats in front and the land has a gradual, easy slope to the base of Cockscomb Hill..." (Cockscomb Hill later became the location for the Astoria Column. "Easy slope" is a bit of an exaggeration.)

The people who had land were eager to sell it to newcomers who were shown plat maps with new roads put in and blocks marked out. Unfortunately, the early owners did not work together to design their roads and blocks. Shively's blocks were smaller than McClure's blocks and streets that later connected the two sections often had a jog in them. Building roads became a priority of the town council, interested in attracting new settlers. This was done without putting in drainage ditches or pipes.

In addition, the trees whose roots helped to hold the dirt were cut down. When the rains came, water soaked the soil which had nothing to hold it in place. Rain-water runoff took the path of least resistance cutting across properties and into houses. When it became obvious that rainwater would be a problem, it was too late to build

enough ditches where they were needed. This problem was repeated in all sections of town.

Following are a number of stories about landslides in Astoria taken straight out of the newspapers and in date order. The last ones focus on one particular slide.

ASTORIA'S EARLY LANDSLIDES

Astoria's two big landslides, in 1950 and 1954, are well-known, and within the memory of many residents today. Stories have been printed about them in *Cumtux* and even in *Life Magazine*. There had been plenty of warning that these events would occur, warnings that were ignored over many years.

Roadwork offered an income for those in need of extra money. Men were hired by the county to dig dirt and move rock. Massive changes took place in the landscape.

The *Tri-Weekly Astorian* on July 1, 1873 reported:

Grading—The County Court having ordered that the Court-house block be filled as required by the established grade work has been commenced upon the job. A tram-way has been put down to the bluff, and earth is taken to the block in cars.

Then, two months later,

A huge land slide started near the head of Jefferson street [Duane] night before last, where Messrs Forner and Gray are getting earth to fill the

D. Drake, later business manager of the *Budget* and then a young man just breaking into the printing trade, was associated with him. Mr. Dunbar died in Pendleton in 1904. And not with his boots on as many predicted," his daughter says.

Mrs. Roberts from her father inherited a love for writing and still engages in this pursuit. Some of her stories of early Alaskan days were printed in the *Matrix* at the University of Washington last year and won her a prize. This information came not from her but from her son.

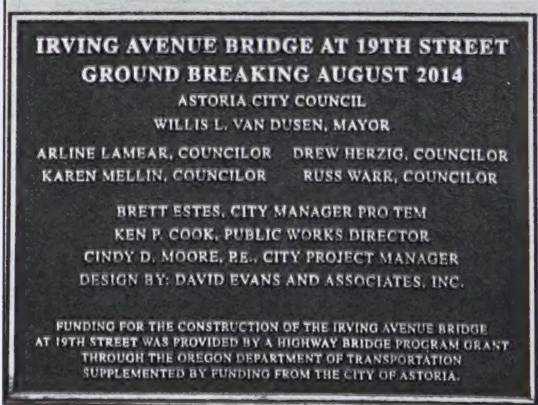
The Roberts are living at 1019 West Third, Spokane. This is the first time Mrs. Roberts has seen Astoria for twenty-five years and naturally she misses many of the old landmarks which were destroyed in the fire of 1922.

Note: The story of Soapy Smith is told in the Spring 2004 Cumtux.

One result of a search on the name of O. W. Dunbar on the CCHS Internet Archive site was from The Weekly Budget newspaper Vol. IV No. 19: Wed. Feb 24, 1897, a rude reference to Oscar Dunbar as "A little penny-a-line journalist."

Another story tells of how Oscar Dunbar was beaten up by Thomas Linville for implying that he smuggled opium. ☞

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE EDITOR



ASTORIA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1979

45TH REUNION

by Laura Torres

ON SEPTEMBER 27 and 28 our graduating class of 1979 had our forty-fifth class reunion. There were good drinks, good food and great company with people we have known for at least forty-five years and beyond. The events were held at Buoy Beer on Marine Drive and Pacific Distillers on the waterfront in a beautiful old warehouse. Both were excellent venues which I highly recommend.

Classmates came from all over including Florida, Louisiana, California, Washington, and many locals were there also. It was great to see the over fifty people that came to each event. Half the fun of these reunions is to try to see how many of our classmates we can still recognize and to learn what their journey

in life has been. We discover that many have the same passions for traveling, trips to Europe, Japan, Mexico, Alaska and all the exciting places of the world. We learn about those who volunteer or play sports or are retired. And we learn that people have children, and grandchildren that we spoil relentlessly. Even though we only see each other once in a while we have a shared history going back to 1979 and before.

Thanks for coordinating the events go to Jack Marincovich, Denise Stephens, Kristi McCauley and John Dulcich for pulling it all together. The next one will be at our fiftieth in 2029, yikes!! See you all then. 🍷

back cover: ASTORIA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1979 CLASS REUNION, 2024

front row: MIKE KAUFMAN (CLASS OF 1978), SHAWN SCHMELZER, KATHI JENNINGS-BRANDT, MONICA MESTRICH, LORI BUDDE CARLSON, IRENE AIKEN-FERGUSON, DENIS SHARP STEPHENS, KRISTI NYMAN MCCAULEY, JACK MARINCOVICH, LINDA DREESZEN STONE.

2nd row: JOHN GOODENBERGER, LAURI GEDENBERG MARTIN, BUTCH LEE, PAT LEAHY, BRIAN LESLIE, TED TAKKO, JACKI FLETCHER, CURTIS RUTHERFORD, MIKE ABRAHAMS, DIANA PORTER GODSIL, TOM LEACH, BRENT LEBACK.

back row: DAN CEDERBERG, ANITA RAHKOLA, TAD GOTTING, FRED SPOUL, LAURA PENNER, TAPIO JAAKOLA, PETE GIMRE, BOB STEINMAN, MIKE LAIRD, JOHN DULCICH.



ASTORIA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1979 CLASS REUNION, 2024

SEE LIST OF NAMES ON PAGE 48